

Literature and Psychology

THE QUARTERLY NEWS LETTER OF THE CONFERENCE ON LITERATURE AND PSYCHOLOGY OF THE MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION

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Qu'a faict l'action genitale aux hommes,
si naturelle, si necessaire et si juste, pour n'en
oser parler sans vergongne et pour l'exclurre des
propos serieux et reglez? Nous prononçons hardi-
ment: tuer, desrober, trahir; et cela, nous n'oserions
qu'entre les dents? Est-ce à dire que moins nous en
exhalons en parole, d'autant nous avons loy d'en
grossir la pensée?

--Montaigne. Essais, Livre III,
Ch. V.

Since the Conference on Literature and Psychology has not yet achieved status as a permanent Discussion Group, we once again make use of this pre-Convention issue to comply with the rules of MLA for the conduct of annual Conferences by

- (1) publishing herein the paper which will be the subject of our discussion at our annual meeting,
- (2) presenting herein the Tentative Agenda of that meeting
- (3) reminding subscribers who intend to be present at the MLA meeting that they are required to write to Professor Collins announcing their intention to be present at our Conference. This is the fourth time that we have followed this procedure, for this is our fifth annual meeting.

Professor Edel, whose Conference paper we are honored to present herein, is a regular member of the faculty of NYU, now acting as Visiting Professor of Literary Criticism at Indiana University. He has been a member of our group since its foundation in 1950, and his contributions to our annual discussions have always been most stimulating and incisive. It is, therefore, particularly gratifying to us that he has expanded and documented his critical position in his present paper. His method of approach, utilizing examination and re-examination of a work of literature through the triple lens of literary, psychodynamic, and biographical interpretation, may well prove to be far-reaching in its influence upon the type of literary criticism which we represent. We are all the more grateful because he has chosen his documentation from the

works of Willa Cather, concerning whose writings Professor Adel is an acknowledged authority. It was he who was entrusted with the completion and editing of the critical biography of Willa Cather by the late E. K. Brown, a work which he cites in his paper.

The remainder of this issue is devoted to our usual correspondence and bibliography and to an analysis of our subscription list as of the date of this issue, a subject which will furnish the basis for some discussion of ways and means for the future conduct of LITERATURE AND PSYCHOLOGY.

Tentative Agenda of the

FIFTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON LITERATURE AND PSYCHOLOGY

To be held at the meeting of the Modern Language Association of America on Tuesday, December 28, 1954, 3:45 p.m. to 5:15 p.m., Parlor B, Hotel Statler, New York, N. Y.

1. Continuance of Organization

Question: Shall we continue the meetings of a group to discuss the inter-relationships between literature and psychology in the form of an annual Conference or, alternatively, as a Discussion Group, if the latter is approved by the officers of MLA?

2. Permanent Organization

If it is the wish of those present, the Chairman will entertain a motion that a nominating committee be appointed from those in attendance, to present a ticket for chairman, secretary, editor, and steering committee for 1955, for election by those in attendance at the close of the meeting.

3. Conference Paper

"Willa Cather's The Professor's House: An Inquiry into the Use of Psychology in Literary Criticism"

Presentation by Dr. Leon Edel, Visiting Professor of Literary Criticism at Indiana University, based on the mimeographed paper distributed before the Conference.

4. Discussion

Discussion from the floor based (1) on Professor Edel's paper, (2) on contents of recent issues of LITERATURE AND PSYCHOLOGY, and (3) general topics, in the order named. Each speaker will be limited to four or five minutes in all. Members who cannot attend may submit brief statements which will be read or summarized by the Secretary.

5. Recommendations

The Editor will report briefly on LITERATURE AND PSYCHOLOGY. Suggestions and recommendations for its future form, content, and financing will be received. Shall the publication be continued? Shall there be a specific topic for the next annual meeting, if any?

6. The Election

Slate to be presented by the nominating committee, if No. 2 above is approved, or by nominations from the floor.

7. Adjournment

Officers for the 1954 meeting:

Chairman: Carvel Collins

Secretary-Editor: Leonard F. Manheim

Steering Committee: Wayne Burns
William J. Griffin
Joseph Prescott

WILLA CATHER'S THE PROFESSOR'S HOUSE: AN INQUIRY INTO THE USE OF PSYCHOLOGY IN LITERARY CRITICISM

It is my purpose in this paper to inquire into the use of psychology by the student of letters. I have been struck by the degree to which those attending our group every year since it was founded talk at cross-purposes. We agree that psychology can illuminate art, can be, and indeed is, one of the major tools of criticism. But I rather suspect that there is a tendency often to misunderstand the uses of the psychological tool, or to wield it so clumsily as to alienate the more conventional critics who cannot begin to understand what we are talking about. And of course they won't understand us until we are sure we understand each other.

One of the faults--let us face it squarely--of the critic using psychology has been his tendency to freely take hold of certain fixed ideas in Freud, or in some of Freud's successors, and apply them to literature. The writer who exulted in our bulletin that such terminology is becoming more widely used and that critics no longer shudder when the term "oedipus complex" or "anal personality" is mentioned quite frankly made me shudder. I suspect he saw psychological criticism as a weapon with which to belabor the conventional critic. I think it is one thing when psychologists use the language appropriate to their profession; it is quite another when critics leave their own ground and try to imitate psychologists.

We are not engaged in a war in which psychological terms are to be crammed down the throats of the non-psychological critics. We are confronted with two basic questions. The first is: how can the psychological tool be used meaningfully in criticism of literature? The second is: how can we communicate the delicate materials--delicate because they involve wholly new concepts of the

imagination--of our discoveries in such language as to be readily understood. Since criticism destroys itself when it is unclear, I see this as a matter of extreme importance.

The confusion prevailing in our midst is even more confounded by the wall that exists between those who have had some experience of the psycho-analytic process and those who merely have read some books about psychology: that is, between those who have had the emotional experience involved in analysis, and those who have merely a theoretical and intellectual grasp of what is involved. There are still further divisions among those who have been analyzed. Some think in strict Freudian terms, others in terms of Horney or Sullivan or in the further refinements of recent teachers and schools.

The problem I have devised, therefore, is an attempt to face this confusion, to see whether this year we cannot try to put some order in our methods and objectives. I have chosen a comparatively simple work of fiction: Willa Cather's The Professor's House, published about thirty years ago. I am going to go over it three times. The first time I will look at it from conventional critical ground, using the admirable analysis of the book to be found in the late E. K. Brown's life of Willa Cather. The second time I will look at the internal content of the novel in the manner of those who apply fixed symbols from the psychology textbooks. Finally I will try to show how we can obtain a meaningful illumination, capable of communication, by the use of the psychological tool when directly applied to a biographical approach.

I

The Conventional Critical Approach

The Professor's House, published in September 1925, is the story of a professor in a mid-western university who has achieved success but derives no particular pleasure from it. The novel is a record of his mental depression. With the money received from a prize he has won for a monumental historical work, he has built a new house, to please his wife and daughters. He would prefer to remain in the rented frame house in which he has moulded his career for thirty years. Indeed he cannot bring himself to move out of his old study, located in the attic, where still stand the wire forms on which a dress-maker fitted the clothes for his wife and growing daughters. The attic-sewing room is lit by an oil lamp. It is heated by a stove. Professor St. Peter has scorned the cushion-comforts. He had a "show" study downstairs and has one in the new house. But the attic room with its silent dummies was comfort enough for him. He clings to the old place even after the rest of the house has been emptied and the moving is over. Since the lease still has some months to run he decides he will keep his former work-room until he has to give it up.

His oldest daughter is Rosamond. She has married a suave, fast-talking pretentious but cultivated young man named Louis Marsellus. We gather he is Jewish, although Miss Cather does not say so. She puts it this way: "There was nothing Semitic about his countenance except his nose..." Marsellus has with great practicality turned to commercial use in aviation a certain discovery made by one of the Professor's former students, Tom Outland, who was Rosamond's fiancee but was killed in the first world war. He left his patent to Rosamond and since her marriage to Marsellus it has become a source of wealth. The

Professor loves his daughter very much but intensely dislikes the upstart qualities of her husband and accordingly feels a certain alienation from her. The Professor's wife, however, is extremely fond of her son-in-law and his European affectations. She feels that her husband, in his withdrawal from the entire family, does not sufficiently recognize how materially its fortunes are being altered by the acumen of Louie. There is a second daughter who is married to a columnist named McGregory. They tend to side with the father against the nouveau-riche world of Louie and Rosamond. The latter are also building a new house--a Norwegian manor house, set incongruously into this mid-western community.

The first part of the book, titled "The Family," sketches for us the Professor's alienation within his family; his feeling that his wife and daughters do not really understand his deeper emotional life and his rebellion against the crass materialism of the college town. He has isolated himself rather successfully over the years. He has built himself a French garden and cultivated his palate; he drinks French wines and concocts delicate sauces; he has a beach house on the lake and spends long lonely hours in the water. He is a Gallic epicure set in the middle-west, like his garden, isolated in surroundings to which he does not belong. He has disliked the college politics. He has had only one student who has meant anything to him, Tom Outland. He dislikes the new generation of students. He feels himself oppressed by the prosaic and mediocre world of the town of which his wife and daughters are so much a part. Material values have been exalted here over those he cherishes: the rich fabric of art related to the rich fabric of the old religion in which great cathedrals and the drama of Good and Evil exalted men to a high creativity.

The second part of the book is called "Tom Outland's Story." Here Miss Cather attempts a risky technical trick, which is nevertheless a time-honored device. In the manner of Cervantes or Smollett she interpolates a story within a story, the autobiographical fragment written by Tom Outland which he confided to Professor St. Peter and which deals with a crucial episode in the young man's life. Miss Cather herself explained she had in mind those Dutch paintings in which an interior is scrupulously rendered and in which a window is shown and then what can be seen through the window: so the effect is that of a picture within a picture. Having given us the interior of the Professor's family life, she directs our attention to the one important window in it--the one that looks out upon Tom Outland's adventure.

The great adventure had been his discovery of a Cliff-dwellers' village in a New Mexican canyon. Here was beauty alike primitive and sophisticated. Here were houses that let in wind and sun and yet sheltered an unfathomable past. Here also was a great tower: "It was still as sculpture...The tower was the fine thing that held all the jumble of houses together and made them mean something...That village sat looking down into the cañon with the calmness of eternity." The Cliff-dwellers' houses are never overtly contrasted with the houses in the Professor's town but they invite contrast. In the modern town the emphasis, as E. K. Brown observes, is on the individual buildings. In the ancient village it is on the architectural as well as social unity.

Tom made his discovery with the aid of his cow-punching friend, Roddy. And he travelled to Washington in great excitement to tell the Department of the Interior, carrying with him samples of the pottery he had discovered. In the capital he encountered governmental red tape. He sat in outer offices,

He was met with indifference. Civil servants seemed to him strange modern cave-dwellers living in rows of apartments as if in rabbit warrens; and their careerism and arrogance blotted out any hope for him. He turned his back on Washington disillusioned, only to find a greater disappointment waiting for him. Roddy had profited by the arrival of a German anthropologist to sell him the entire contents of the Cliff town, and he had shipped the ancient relics to Europe. Roddy had deposited the money for Tom in the bank. Tom in anger broke with Roddy and then went to the Cliff town and spent there certain days of magnificent solitude, hiding in the high tower his notes and records of the entire adventure. Then descending again, he took the money and went to college, there meeting the Professor who became his guide and mentor.

The final part of the novel is a mere sketch. Titled "The Professor" it returns to St. Peter's isolation in his attic. He remains there while his family is away during the summer, living a kind of monastic dream-life, with the old sewing-woman occasionally turning up to act as charwoman. We see the Professor lonely and depressed. One day on awakening from a nap he discovers the room is filled with fumes from the stove, but he finds himself incapable of making any effort to cross over and throw open the window. He is ready to die. The fortuitous arrival of the sewing woman saves his life. And there the novel ends. We can only speculate that the Professor will go on living in isolation amid his family.

What are we to make of this novel--if we can call it a novel? It is a knitting together of two inconclusive fragments about a professor, his family and his death-wish, to a tale of a mesa and Cliff-dwellers and the adventures of a young man. The two episodes in themselves, those relating to the Professor, do not constitute a novel: they give us a picture of the Professor's state of mental depression which nothing in the book really explains. Why does he wish for death at a time when his life has been crowned by success and when his family flourishes as never before; when indeed there is the promise of a grand-child, for Rosamond expects one as the book ends? The Tom Outland story fills in the background of Rosamond's wealth and gives us the strange story of the young man who changed the whole course of the Professor's life, but this does not illuminate the Professor's final state of mind.

E. K. Brown, in his appraisal of the work, finds in it an inner unity which he explains in terms of the symbolism of houses within the book. There are the two houses of the Professor, and of these the old house is the significant one. The new house is wrong for him. The Marsellus Norwegian manor-house is wrong too. It is a product of pretention and materialism, without regard for the essential dignity of human dwellings. The homes of the Cliff-dwellers had that dignity. In the third portion of the book, Brown observes, the link between all these houses is established. "In the first part," he writes, "it was plain that the professor did not wish to enter into the serene phase of his life correlative with [the new house]...At the beginning of the third part it becomes plain that he cannot indefinitely continue to make the old attic study the theater of his life, that he cannot go on prolonging or attempting to prolong his prime, the phase of his life correlative with that... What begins to dominate St. Peter is something akin to the Cliff-dwellers, something primitive that had ruled him long ago when he was a boy on a pioneer farm...What counts above all is nature, seen as a web of life and finally of death."

For the Professor remembers (and Miss Cather misquotes) an old poem he had read, Longfellow's translation of the Anglo-Saxon "Grave."

For thee a house was built
Ere thou wast born;
For thee a mould was made
Ere thou of woman camest.

And Brown concludes: "All that had seemed a hanging back from the future--the clinging to the old attic study, the absorption in Tom Outland's quality and the civilization of the Cliff-dwellers, the ways of the missionary fathers, the revival of interest in the occupations of childhood and its pleasures--was something very unlike what it had seemed. It was profound, unconscious preparation for death, for the last house of the professor."

This seems to me admirable literary criticism and it penetrates to the Professor's state of mind. But it still does not answer why the Professor has lost the will to live and Miss Cather gives us no clue. She merely records the Professor's despair.

II

The Psychological Approach

And now I want to apply the psychological tool to this material. Let us look at it through the understanding of people and of symbols offered us by Sigmund Freud and, more recently, by Harry Stack Sullivan.

The first striking element in the story is the Professor's strange attachment to his attic room, high in the house, old and cramped but safely away from the family life in the house below. Now people do form attachments to rooms and houses. But the Professor's attachment here verges upon the eccentric. The Professor clearly thinks of his attic as a place of "insulation from the engaging drama of domestic life...only a vague sense, generally pleasant, of what went on below came up the narrow stairway." And later he thinks that "on that perilous journey down through the human house, he might lose his mood, his enthusiasm, even his temper..." This is much more than a Professor seeking a quiet corner for his working hours. The room is "insulation." The Professor obtains from his family care, food, attention, but he withdraws from it and makes demands on it. There is decidedly an infantile quality in such conduct: like a baby that owns the mother's breast and need make no return for it.

In this attic room, tiny and snug as a womb, cradled in a warm and alive household, but safe from any direct contact with the world outside, St. Peter can feel taken care of and as undisturbed as an embryo. The room furthermore is used by one other person, the motherly sewing woman. Adjuncts to this motherly figure are the two dressmakers' dummies. Seen as part of the sewing woman, the mother figure, these two dummies express opposite experiences of the mother--one is altogether matronly, of a bulk suggesting warm flesh and reassuring physical possession. The other is of sophisticated line suggesting spirit and sexual awareness and interest. So the professor has in his secluded place the beloved mother who is both protective, caring for him and also of some sexual interest and erotic stimulation to him. He wants his

mother to be both a mother and an erotic stimulation, and above all he wants a mother he can possess exclusively.

The novelist then weaves a second story but it is in reality a repetition of the same theme. Her hero, again a man, yearns for a mesa high up on a sun-beaten plateau and when he conquers it he finds a cave city. Caves are feminine sexual symbols. Not only are there caves for him, inviolate, untouched, like a virgin mother, preserved from others, a mother of long ago, of the infant years, who belonged only to the infant greedy at her breast, but there is beautiful pottery. Pottery is again a feminine symbol. The hero cherishes the pottery and comes to regret that he has a male companion with whom he must share these precious objects. The disinclination to share might be seen as sibling jealousy for the mother, or the kind of rivalry the boy in his Oedipal phase has for the father who possesses the mother in the sexual way the boy aspires to have her. The hero is disillusioned first when his Mother-Country, symbolized by Washington, is not interested in his discoveries and then when the male chum puts the pottery to some practical use: so, we might say, the boy is disillusioned when he first learns that his mother is not a virgin and that his father is the cause of her having been thus despoiled. So the hero drives the male chum (father or sibling) away and spends a period as blissful as that of the infant in full possession of the breast among the caves--that is with his mother. He has preserved his record of his narcissistic-infantile paradise, the paradise of life in the womb, of possessing mother physically, utterly, in a notebook which he carefully secretes in the tower. Like the Professor's attic room, the tower is a still higher and more secluded place where the mother can be preserved if not in her actuality (the pottery) at least in his diary describing his "intercourse" with her (Outland's detailed account of the caves and their contents as he first found them). Life, its rude events and passage of time, its insistence on moving forward and routing the infant from the womb and the breast, also disrupts the hero's blissful eternity in his hidden mesa, his caves and his pottery. He has been disturbed. He seeks stubbornly at least to preserve the memory of days with mother (mesa, etc.) even as the Professor cannot leave his cubbyhole study and would not want the dressmakers' dummies removed.

But life does move on. The Professor seeks a solution to his problem, for in moving on, life demands that he follow. The family which sustained him in the house below while he took refuge in his attic room, moves to another house. If he follows he must change and grow too, he must accept a new room, a modern room, a room on a lower floor, he must take his place in the family on a new basis in which the daughters have married and will have their children. He must in other words see life on a new adult basis. In the story this is indicated by new demands on him to take a more active part in the lives of his grown-up children. But the Professor clings to the old attic room and with life gone from the house beneath he is threatened with isolation. He can cease being dependent and become active. Or he must accept the self-isolation which now is greater than ever since the family has gone its way. Appropriately enough the novelist ends her story with the Professor nearly suffocating in his room. For to remain in the womb beyond one's time is indeed to invite suffocation. The tenacity of the writer's determination to maintain this status quo ante, if only in fantasy, is illustrated in the ending of the story. It is the sewing woman (who by the way was sensibly eager to move to her new bigger sewing room, to a new life, a new relationship, and cannot understand the Professor's infantile clinging to the old room, the

old relationship with mother) who rescues the professor from suffocation. A mother-figure has once more appeared on the scene for the Professor, who thus hangs on to his mother fixation even though it has brought him an immense threat. The book ends with the Professor's problem unresolved save in the sense that ultimately Mother-earth will enclose him in her womb.

Psychology thus has illuminated our story and answered some of our questions. The Professor's death-wish, undefined by the author, would appear to be due to the lingering infantile problems which are so strong that this successful adult scholar, otherwise a figure of dignity and importance, adheres to a pattern of infantile behaviour under a mask of rationalization: a love for the past, a dislike of the present. But how are we to convey this material, so loaded with infantile sexuality, the womb, incestuous fantasy, Oedipal situation--a veritable welter of "psychologizing" which has meaning only to those who have grasped these concepts. And does this interpretation, however fascinating, tell the layman anything about the novel, as novel? or is he being offered a virtually meaningless diagram, clinical, and in reality speculative, of the "unconscious" fantasies of the Professor. We all live in some form of a house and doubtless for some of us, on some unconscious level, houses may be symbols for the womb. But houses are also a universal fact and a universal reality, testifying to a man's need for shelter. It is true that man thrust out of the womb into the world inevitably must seek some shelter by stages that start with the basket and the cradle and end in an adult dwelling; and that perhaps there are certain individuals who instead of welcoming the shelters of this world long for the unattainable state of the embryo. Houses are for growing children and adults: wombs are for embryos, and we juggle so to speak with the obvious when we invoke such general symbols.

And what has become of the fine social criticism in the book? In tracing a diagram of the Professor's neurosis this becomes a mere desire to cling to the past for infantile sexual reasons. Yet this is perhaps the best part of Miss Cather's novels, which record the protest of a gifted woman against the ever-increasing conformities and clichés in American life. Her voice is never more resonant than when she shows how the capital of the pioneers has been converted into the small change of standardization; and that while the original settlers wrested from the land the glory of America, the sons of the settlers became real estate agents parcelling out this land and dealing in mortgages; or became front-office men like Louie Marsellus. The anguish of Tom Outland in Washington (whatever neurotic-traits he may thereby have revealed) is still the genuine anguish of someone who wants government to meet its responsibilities and finds it degraded by careerists and demagogues.

And what of the criticism of the novel itself? To label the inner symbols or meanings in terms of Freud and Sullivan gives us no help in assessing the work as a work of art. We have merely used it as an instrument of quasi-clinical diagnosis. Has Miss Cather successfully carried out her general intention? What is the explanation of the professor's happiness in the past and malaise in the present--a present in which, even without neurotic motivation, the malaise can certainly be held to be genuine. Let us pursue this question on the third level.

III

The Psychological-Biographical Approach

It is my contention that the method used in the second portion of this paper leads us to a diagnosis that requires translation into more meaningful critical terms. And I hold that this translation is possible only when we call in the resources of biography. My reason for saying this is simple: psychology is concerned with what goes on in the consciousness of man; it can operate effectively only when it is concerned with a given consciousness. A dream is meaningless unless it is attached to the dreamer; for each dreamer dreams his own dreams and puts into them his personal symbols. These can only be understood after a study of the recurrent uses to which the symbols are put. Ernest Jones has significantly said:

A work of art is too often regarded as a finished thing-in-itself, something almost independent of the creator's personality, as if little would be learned about the one or the other by connecting the two studies. Informed criticism, however, shows what a correlated study of the two sheds light in both directions, on the inner nature of the composition and on the creative impulse of its author. The two can be separated only at the expense of diminished appreciation, whereas to increase our knowledge of either automatically deepens our understanding of the other.

It is true that sometimes, as with Chaucer and Shakespeare, we have so few facts about the life of these great creative figures that we have no alternative but to cling to our shreds of evidence and to speculate endlessly. But in the case of a writer so recently in our midst as Willa Cather there is abundant biographical material to enable us to capture her actual experience. Then we can see--what she at best may have only glimpsed--how this was incorporated into the imagination by which she created.

The biographical data I will give you comes from E. K. Brown's biography of Willa Cather and from the admirable memoir written by her friend of four decades, Edith Lewis. In these works we discover how intensely Willa Cather suffered as a little girl from an initial displacement from one house to another. She was born in Virginia and lived in a large house. At ten she was torn from the East and taken to the Divide. Here she lived in a new house, and discovered also the sod houses of the early settlers as she was later to observe the cave-houses of the Cliff-dwellers in the southwest. We note that the Professor of her novel was "dragged" to Kansas from the east when he was eight and that he "nearly died of it."

In Nebraska Willa Cather discovered that nearly all the inhabitants were displaced from somewhere else, and some had been involved in an inter-continental displacement. Her later novels would depict with deep emotion the meaning of this displacement of the pioneers from Europe and civilization to the rugged prairie: Willa Cather could sympathize with them; her anguish was theirs. Then in Red Cloud, in Nebraska, where the adolescent girl began to discover the life of the frontier there was a neighboring house in which lived a childless couple of considerable culture. In her own house there was the clash of temperaments and rivalries of a large family of boys and girls and a Southern mother, a gentlewoman, somehow strangely aloof and tired of her repeated pregnancies. And so this other house became a retreat, and the

cultivated Mrs. Wiener, from France, served as a kind of second mother to Willa Cather, gave her books and quiet, and a snug parlor rug on which she could lie and read by the hour. You will find this portrayed in the story "Old Mrs. Harris." Later in Lincoln, when Willa Cather was at college, she discovered still another house, filled with husky young men, and an old-world mother, and again she made it a home, this time as escape from the dreariness of a furnished room. This was the Westermann home and the late William Lynn Westermann of Columbia University, a distinguished Egyptologist, has testified to the accuracy of Willa Cather's picture of this home in her novel One of Ours.

In 1895 Miss Cather went to Pittsburgh and worked on a newspaper, living in a series of depressing boarding houses. The way in which she escaped from these into the world of the theater and music is reflected in her short story "Paul's Case." After five years of this sort of existence she met a young woman who changed the course of her life. This was Isabelle McClung, a strikingly handsome woman interested in the arts. She was a daughter of a wealthy Pittsburgh judge and lived in a large mansion, and she finally invited Willa Cather to make her home there. It was a motherly gesture and Isabelle became a kind of patron of Willa Cather's art. This house was many times more spacious and elegant than the Wiener or the Westermann houses. And here Willa Cather put together her first book of poems, published stories that began to attract attention, and finally her first book of tales. She worked in a quiet little room at the back of the McClung mansion. It had been a sewing room and still had in it dressmakers' dummies.

Willa Cather remained deeply attached to this house for years. Even after she had moved to New York and taken a new abode in Greenwich Village and was the successful managing editor of McClure's Magazine she would dash up to Pittsburgh for long stays with Isabelle and work in her favorite little room. Then in the midst of the first world war came a change.

This was Isabelle's decision to marry a violinist she had known for some years, Jan Hambourg, who was Jewish and who, with his father and brother, had a school of music in Toronto. This happened around 1917 and it found Willa in her late forties (Isabelle too was no longer young when she married), and apparently quite upset to have this violent change in the fixed pattern of the years. From now on her work begins to reflect certain inner anxieties. Her novel One of Ours written in the early twenties is an anxious book, reflecting her disillusion in what was happening to the new generation in Nebraska. It won the Pulitzer prize. The title of the next novel clearly conveys the state of mind of the author: it is the story of A Lost Lady, who clings to a past in a changing world. And after this she writes The Professor's House. But just before doing so, before she even had the idea for the novel, she had gone to France to visit Isabelle and Jan Hambourg. Isabelle in her French villa had set aside a study for her friend. The new house would reincorporate in it this essential feature of the Pittsburgh mansion. Miss Lewis testified:

The Hambourgs had hoped that she would make Ville-d'Avray her permanent home. But although the little study was charming, and all the surroundings were attractive, and the Hambourgs themselves devoted and solicitous, she found herself unable to work at Ville-d'Avray. She felt indeed that she would never be able to work there.

Why? Miss Lewis does not tell us. But she does tell us what we already have suspected, that there are some traits of Jan Hambourg in Louie Marsellus. Hambourg was a cultivated musician, deeply read in French Literature and apparently as good a talker as Louie. Miss Cather had dedicated A Lost Lady to him thereby welcoming him to the circle of her intimate friends. The strange thing is that she dedicated The Professor's House as well: "For Jan, because he likes narrative." As we collate the rather pretentious figure of Louie with the figure of the real-life musician we recover so many similarities, or exaggerations of certain traits, that we are prompted to speculate whether the novelist did not write this flattering dedication to soften the effect of the unflattering portrait she had painted.

It is now possible to see the real-life ingredients of The Professor's House. Willa Cather's early uprootings have more meaning in explaining her attachment to a fixed abode than the universal uprooting from the womb; her mother's aloofness, and her search for substitute mothers in substitute houses, can also be readily seen. The Pittsburgh house with its sewing room of course has been translated into the Professor's frame house. Like the Professor she won a prize in middle life and like him achieved success. The new house at Ville-d'Avray represented the new house built by the Professor's family and could be no substitute for the old one since at Ville-d'Avray Isabelle could no longer function for Willa Cather as a maternal figure.

Here we touch at the heart of our problem. We can see what motivated the depression of Willa Cather's middle years, when she wrote that "the world broke in two in 1922 or thereabouts" for we know that to her inner security needs, existing from childhood, was added the deepened sense that a mother-figure had rejected her. What is interesting is that in The Professor's House Miss Cather had so identified herself with the Professor that she could not supply any "rejection" motive for his depression. In reality, of course, all that had happened had been that Isabelle had moved forward in life and had married. Willa Cather had not been able to move forward too and it is this that she expressed in her first fantasy of the Professor, who cannot move forward with his family, although his life has been crowned by fame and success.

But such is the nature of our inner fantasies that they persist in seeking expression. In the first fantasy the Professor in reality is the one who, by clinging to his attic, has rejected his family. Willa Cather accordingly opens a window into a second fantasy, and there she can incorporate the rejection she has really felt. The Tom Outland story is linked to Isabelle in a curious way. In Willa Cather's consciousness it would seem the Pittsburgh house, standing on the heights, could be identified with the mesa and the tower. For when Willa Cather published The Song of the Lark, her first novel that drew upon the Southwest, she dedicated it to Isabelle McClung with the following verses:

On uplands,
At morning,
The world was young, the winds were free;
A garden fair,
In that blue desert air,
Its guest invited me to be.

Uplands had become Outland. The world in the "blue desert air" of the mesa is a recreation of the feeling of freedom Willa Cather had experienced in her life with the maternal Isabelle, patroness of the arts, and in the sewing room sanctuary of the Pittsburgh mansion. But Tom Outland is rejected twice; the maternal-paternal government rejects him and when he returns home he finds that Roddy, his boon companion, maternal-paternal, has also rejected him.

The fantasy of rejection is thus incorporated into the novel. The Tom Outland story is complete. That of the Professor is not. And by merging our insights gained from psychology with the biographical data that gives us clues to the author's dream-work, we are enabled to render a critical evaluation: we can see the failure of The Professor's House as a work of fiction. The Professor lives for us as a man who has given up his good fight and takes the world as preparation for the grave. He has everything to live for; and for reasons unexplained and unresolved he does not want to live. The novel is incomplete because of the inner problems of the author which did not permit her to clearly resolve the problems of the character she had projected in her novel. Therefore the Professor was not given a clear-cut motivation; his state of mind was described but not explained. The truth was that Willa Cather could not admit to herself--as who can?--that what was troubling her was not in reality the departure of Isabelle but what it symbolized: the re-assertion of her old need to have an "other house" and the security of a mother-figure in it. In the guise of Outland, and with a fantasy further removed from her problems, she could project the deeper anxiety resulting from her sense of rejection.

All of Willa Cather's later work can be read in the light of this feeling of insecurity: her choice of the Rock as the symbol of endurance, her rigidity in the face of the second world war, her gradual regression, in the novels, to childhood situations, all these spring from the same over-powering isolation, death-wish, yet struggle to live. The world did break in two for Willa Cather. One part of it moved on and she remained on the other. And The Professor's House in its very structure contains this break: it is an unsymmetrical and unrealized novel because Willa Cather could not bring the two parts of her broken world together again.

A final word. In this third portion of my exposition I have used certain terminology such as "rejection" and "death-wish" and "dream-work" only because I am speaking to a psychologically oriented group. All these terms in my opinion should be translated into the usual language of literary criticism.

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CORRESPONDENCE

From Mr. Abraham A. Steinberg:

May I happily object to the gloomy picture painted in the last issue of Lit. and Psych., of scholarly imperviousness to psychoanalytically oriented articles on literary subjects? Many of my own rejections, I am sure, spring not from the nature of my approach but from the fact that I simply did not put forth the effort required to organize and communicate my ideas effectively. If we do well enough, I am convinced we will be heard; and this belief has been buttressed by the acceptance of an essay, "Fitzgerald's Portrait of a Psychiatrist," by the U. of Kansas City Review, to appear in the middle of 1955. Lit. and Psych. (Feb. 1953) published an early version of this piece.

May I also call attention to a course entitled, "Literary Figures in the Light of Modern Psychoanalysis," to be given in the spring term on Monday evenings at the New School for Social Research. The works to be discussed are: "The Old Man and the Sea," "Pride and Prejudice," "Lost Horizon," "Wuthering Heights," "The Way of All Flesh," "The Marble Faun," "The Cherry Orchard," "Tess of the D'Urbervilles," "The Cocktail Party," "Sons and Lovers," "Babbitt," "A Doll's House," "The Importance of Being Earnest," "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," and "Alice in Wonderland." The course is given by Dr. Bella S. Van Bark, a psychoanalyst affiliated with the American Institute for Psychoanalysis (the Horney group).

[Let it be noted once again that the course in psycho-literary criticism to which Mr. Steinberg refers is not being taught by a literary scholar.]

From Professor David Bonnell Green, Department of English, Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania:

Your recent discussions of fiction have been most interesting. I remember seeing in some psychoanalytical journal, within the past five years or so, I believe, a reference to fiction written from a specifically psychoanalytic point of view--although not by a psychoanalyst--and technically satisfactory to psychoanalysts. I wonder if any of your psychoanalyst readers could supply the reference.

[Responses from readers, whether psychoanalysts or not, will be welcome. They may be sent to the Editor or directly to Professor Green.]

From Professor William H. F. Lamont, Department of English, Rutgers University New Brunswick, New Jersey. (Excerpts from two letters):

...Some day I hope you will list all the novels which have been analyzed in the past issues of Literature and Psychology and give the date of the study. I, for instance, am tremendously interested in Faulkner's Light in August. Has that ever been analyzed in Lit. and Psy.?...

[It hasn't, but some reader may know whether it has been so treated elsewhere.]

...I am making all sorts of converts around here for Literature and Psychology. The department has two distinct branches--one is composed of the research scholars whose interests are concerned with the factual data of the

author's life; the other branch is concerned with the novel or play itself and uses the biographical stuff only when it helps to understand the book in hand. Your journal is primarily of value to the second group--the interpreters.

From Mr. L. Michael Manheim, Department of English, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware:

On the subject of Shakespeare, love relationships in the sonnets, and the psychology of the sex urges therein--with, I think, a very clever and worthwhile indictment of strictly Freudian criticism of Shakespeare, along with hearty support of some of Freud's basic ideas--I recommend Chapter 2 ("The Unromantic Lady") of Edward Hubler's The Sense of Shakespeare's Sonnets, Princeton, 1952.

BIBLIOGRAPHY (XVI)

Offprints received include the following:

1. William Rose, "The Psychological Approach to the Study of Literature."

The author, who is Chairman of the Institute of Germanic Languages and Literatures at the University of London, writes us that the article "appeared in the Festschrift for Prof. Willoughby a year or two ago...which may be known to some of your members, though I do not know whether the volume has been published in the United States." The article, which is a must reading for any member of our group, contains many brilliant and cogent statements of the position of the psycho-literary critic, only one of which can be reproduced here:

It is not so long ago since the mention of psycho-analysis sent a shudder down the spine of the academic literary historian. But the realization is dawning that an instrument which affords an insight into the mysterious workings of the human mind cannot fail to let in light upon some of the problems of literary production round which we have for so long been circling without being able to penetrate to the innermost core....If these conclusions [of psycho-analysts concerning symbolism in primitive societies and in literature] have been startling, and sometimes shocking, we may perhaps console ourselves with the reflection that the most delightful flowers draw their sustenance from a form of nourishment which is far from delightful, and the discoveries of the psycho-analysts concerning the functioning of the human mind merely provide an extension of this long familiar truth. Psycho-analysis is ruthless, but any scientific inquiry must be conducted in a spirit of ruthlessness, and there is no acceptable reason why the literary analyst should recoil in horror if his investigations lead him to the discovery that poetic genius may feed upon other than ambrosia. (P. 173)

Professor Rose cites a number of authorities, better known, perhaps, abroad than in this country. Some of them, which follow, have not been previously cited in any of our running Bibliographies:

Georg Brandes, Main Currents in Nineteenth Century Literature,

the Introduction to which contains the statement "Literary history is, in its profoundest significance, psychology, the study, the history of the soul."

Theodor Reik, "Freuds Studie über Dostojewski," Imago, Vol. XV, 1929, referring to

Sigmund Freud, "Dostojewski und der Verortung," Gesammelte Werke, Image Publishing Co., (London, 1948) p. 399. (See also our 1951-52 Reprint at page 53.)

Christopher Caudwell, Illusion and Reality (London, 4th ed., 1950), p. 52, for a distinction between Aristotle's theory of "catharsis" and the Freudian use of the term.

Kenneth Burke, "Freud--and the Analysis of Poetry," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 45, 1939-40, p. 391.

C. G. Jung, "Über die Beziehung der analytischen Psychologie zum dichterischen Kunstwerk," in Seelenprobleme der Gegenwart (Zürich, 1946).

Max Graf, "Richard Wagner im 'Fliegenden Holländer,'" Schriften zur angewandten Seelenkunde, 9. Heft (Deuticke, Leipzig und Wien, 1911).

Literary and philosophical references include de Musset, Heine, Mann, Nietzsche, and Schopenhauer.

2. Joseph Prescott, "James Joyce's Stephen Hero," The Journal of English and Germanic Philology, Vol. LIII, No. 2, April, 1954.

This article, so Professor Prescott informs us, is scheduled to be reprinted in The Bell: A Survey of Irish Life (Dublin).

The Times Literary Supplement for January 8, 1954, reviews

John Culton Wisdom, The Unconscious Origin of Berkeley's Philosophy (Hogarth Press and the Institute for Psycho-Analysis)

The names of Peter Heller and Thomas M. Raysor as authors in the September, 1954, issue of PMLA gave rise to an expectation that some element of psychodynamic interpretation might be found in their respective studies of Mann and Wordsworth. Reading of the two papers, however, revealed an aversion on the part of the respective authors against anything more than dipping (and hastily withdrawing) a tentative toe into the chilly pool of depth psychology. Not even that much can be said for the article on Great Expectations in College English for October, 1954, although the novel investigated is one which, at least in your Editor's opinion, literally cries for dynamic interpretation.

The Spring, Summer, and Fall issues of The American Imago (Vol. 11) contain the following papers dealing with literary material:

Ann Leslie Moore and Merrill Moore, "Notes on Re-Reading Hans Sachs' Last Book" (No. 1)

Fritz Wittells, "Heinrich von Kleist--Prussian Junker and Creative Genius" (No. 1)

David M. Rein, "Orestes and Electra in Greek Literature" (No. 1)

Arpad Pauncz, "The Lear Complex in World Literature" (No. 1)

A. Bronson Feldman, "Othello in Reality" (No. 2)

Robert L. Gale, "Freudian Imagery in James's Fiction" (No. 2)

Erich Simenauer, "'Pregnancy Envy' in Rainer Maria Rilke" (No. 3)

Edmund Bergler, "The Double Yardstick in Judging a Writer's Talent" (No. 3)

Of these, by far the most interesting from our viewpoint are by Dr. and Mrs. Moore and by Professor Rein. The former deals with the last work of Dr. Hans Sachs, founder of American Imago. The latter is specifically oriented toward effective literary criticism of the Orestes-dramas of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. Professor Rein points out and attempts in some measure to account for the continuing attraction of the Orestes-Electra themes for writers of tragedy in many languages and ages.

During the days when this journal had the able assistance of Dr. Eleanor Nicholes as its Associate Editor, we were able from time to time to publish here systematic accounts of articles of literary interest in the past volumes of various journals, usually psychoanalytic or psychiatric. In Bibliography (II), in the 1951-52 Reprint at page 51, Psychoanalytic Quarterly, she searched Vols. I through VI, inclusive. This listing is here continued for Vols. VII through XVII (1938-1948):

Vol. VII (1938) has

Harry S. Levey, "Poetry Production as a Supplemental Emergency Defense Against Anxiety" (pp. 232-242).

The poetry produced is by a psychoanalytic patient and is rather poor. The article cites

A. A. Brill, "Poetry as an Oral Outlet," Psa. Rev., Vol. XVIII (1931), No. 4,

F. C. Prescott, The Poetic Mind (See 1951-52 Reprint, page 52,

and

Sigmund Freud, "The Relation of the Poet to Daydreaming," Collected

Papers, Vol. IV ("Der Dichter und das Phantasieren," Gesammelte Werke, London, 1941, Vol. VII, p. 223)

Vol. VIII (1939) has

Gregory Zilboorg, "The Discovery of the Oedipus Complex--Episodes from Marcel Proust" (pp. 279-302).

After reviewing the state of psychoanalytic literature available in French at the time of Proust's writing, Dr. Zilboorg says,

Consequently, one is fully justified in concluding that Proust's was an original discovery; and more, as his story clearly shows, that he anticipated some of the most poignant and complex formulations of Freud in clear and definite language. (p. 301)

Vol. IX (1940) has

Bernard De Voto, "Freud in American Literature" (pp. 236-245).

The article discusses and generally derogates the conscious use of psychoanalytic influences. The author reaches the following amazing conclusion:

Occasionally, isolated men of remarkably intuitive intelligence, like William Blake or Herman Melville, produced literature in which Freudians may feel completely at home, but there was nothing like a concerted movement.

Also, as one tribute to Freud, who had died in 1939,

Richard Sterba, "The Problem of Art in Freud's Writings" (pp. 256-268).

Vol. X (1941) has

Edith Buxbaum, "The Role of Detective Stories in a Child Analysis" (pp. 373-381),

cited by Mr. Lesser in his article in Vol. III, No. 4, at page 4.

Review by Elisabeth Schneider of Richard Sterba's Aesthetic Motive.

Vol. XI (1942) has

Bernice Schultz Engle, "Melampus and Freud" (pp. 83-86),

a brief psychoanalysis of an ancient Greek legend.

Sigmund Freud, "Psychopathic Characters on the Stage."

Freud, in a paper originally written in 1904, the mss. of which was supplied by Max Graf, comments on Ajax, Philoctetes, Hamlet, and others.

Bertram Lewin's review of S. I. Hayakawa's Language in Action, regretting a lack of specific Freudian orientation.

Vol. XII (1943) has

Louis Smith, "Aaron Burr" (pp. 67-99).

Vol. XIII (1944) has

Henry Alden Bunker, "Mother-Murder in Myth and Legend" (pp. 198-207).

This paper, which is almost contemporaneous with Wertham's Dark Legend, discusses Orestes, Hamlet, Joseph, Jellerophon, Peleus, and others.

Martin Grotjahn's review of De Voto's Mark Twain at Work (p. 522), in which the reviewer calls De Voto "unusually competent" on the evidence of his 1940 paper referred to above.

Bertram Lewin's review of E. Eduardo Krapf's Tomas de Aquino y la Psicopatologia (Buenos Aires), p. 223),

referring to St. Thomas's contributions to psychopathology.

Margaret N. Stone's review of two novels about schizophrenics:

Chris Massie's The Green Circle and Allan Seager's Equinox (p. 387).

The first is praised; the second condemned.

Vol. XIV (1945) has

Henry Lowenfeld's review of Koestler's Arrival and Departure (pp. 105-108), in which the reviewer reaches the interesting conclusion that psychoanalysis cannot take the place of religion.

Susanna S. Laign's review of Oberndorf's "Psychiatric Novels of Oliver Wendell Holmes" (pp. 262-63).

Vol. XV (1946) has

Fritz Wittels, "Psychoanalysis and History: The Nibelungs and the Bible" (pp. 88-103), which also appeared in Vol. III of the Yearbook of Psychoanalysis (1947). (See Reprint 1951-52, p. 53.)

Helen McLean's review of The Psychiatry of Robert Burton by Evans and Morn (245-48).

Vol. XVI (1947) has

Percy Winner's review of Rene Laforgue's Talleyrand (547-49).

Vol. XVII (1948) has

Edward Hirschman, "Boswell: The Biographer's Conflict" (pp. 212-25), which also appeared in Vol. V of the Yearbook of Psychoanalysis (1949). (See Reprint, 1951-52, p. 53, where the author's name is misspelled.)

The author refers to other articles,

"Samuel Johnson's Character, A Psychoanalytic Interpretation," Psa. Rev., Vol. XXXII (1945), pp. 207-218.

Ernst Kris, "Prince Hal's Conflict" (pp. 487-506). (See Reprint, 1951-52, p. 54 for comment.)

Harry B. Lee, "Spirituality and Beauty in Artistic Experience" (pp. 507-23).

Guillermo Ferrari Herdoy's review of Mario Corlisky's De Hamlet A Fausto (Buenos Aires).

Less systematic reading in various journals has also turned up the following:

Charles I. Glicksberg, "Poetry and the Freudian Aesthetic," University of Toronto Quarterly for 1947-48, No. 2 (Jan. 1948), p. 121.

Professor Glicksberg is most aggressive in his attitude toward psychoanalytic criticism. He asserts vigorously that poetry is not "abnormal as the Freudians say [sic]." The psychoanalyst who says that the poet is neurotic should be, he says, psychoanalyzed by the poet. He ends his unrestrained diatribe with these chosen words:

There is something grotesque and scandalous in having the bumbling psychoanalyst pass judgment on the fruits of the creative process. What, after all, does he know about it?

The gentleman doth protest too much, methinks.

James M. Cox, "Remarks on the Sad Initiation of Huckleberry Finn," Sevance Review, Vol. LXII, No. 3 (July-Sept., 1954), pp. 389-406.

Let us turn to one special volume of Psychoanalytic Review, which was searched only through 1931 in our previous issues. Vol. XXIX (1942) has

Ben Karpman, "Neurotic Traits of Jonathan Swift, as Revealed by 'Gulliver's Travels'" (pp. 26 and 165 et seq.)

Paul C. Squires, "The Clairpsychism of Strindberg" (p. 50 et seq.)

Dr. Squires was then engaged in writing Strindberg as Oedipus, in which he is said to "examine au fond [sic] the complex mental disorders from which Strindberg suffered."

Solomon Freehof, "Three Psychiatric Stories from Rabbinic Lore" (pp. 185-87).

Rabbi Freehof tells the stories very briefly, without comment.

A. S. Macquisten and R. W. Pickford, "Psychological Aspects of the Fantasy of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" (pp. 233 et seq.).

The authors are members of the Department of Psychology of The University of Glasgow. Two other articles by Professor Pickford are referred to in the 1951-52 Reprint at page 60.

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At the time of publication of this issue we have listed 136 subscribers (not including exchanges), 41 more than last year, distributed as follows:

Humanities, English, Comparative Literature, and Speech	81
Modern Languages and Literatures	17
Psychology, Medicine, and Allied Fields	17
Libraries	16
Miscellaneous and Unspecified	5